



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

growth

Annual with **bluish-green leaves** and stems that secrete a milky sap when cut.

flower

March - September. Several flowers occur in clusters at the end of the stems, pale yellow, 1/4 to 3/4 inch wide.

stems leaves

Unbranched, 1-4 ft in height

Cotyledons egg-shaped and have petioles. Young leaves are alternate, egg-shaped, with toothed margins and form a rosette. Both have a whitish coating.

Stem leaves are alternate, without hairs, and have lobes that clasp the stem. Margins are toothed and only slightly prickly.

fruit

Mature seed (achenes) have a white feathery pappus that collectively form a white “**puff ball**” similar to dandelion.



Leaf detail showing auricles.



Rosette stage

Elevation:
150-8000 feet

Ecotypes Invaded:
Desertlands, grasslands, non-riparian wetlands, riparian areas, woodlands
& montane forests.

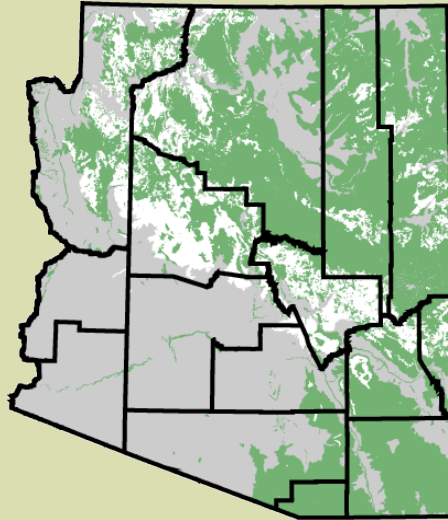
ECOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION

Found throughout the United States; requires disturbance to establish.

S. asper (spiny sow thistle) is very similar in appearance, however this species has rounded lobes that clasp the stem whereas common sowthistle has **distinctly pointed lobes**. Also, the leaf margins of spiny sowthistle are much more spiny or prickly than those of common sowthistle.

Both of the sowthistles can be distinguished from 'true' thistles by the milky sap they emit when broken. The sowthistles might also be confused with Prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), however the midvein on the leaf undersides of this weed has distinct spines or prickles, whereas those of the sowthistles do not.

SUITABLE HABITAT



Suitable habitat based on the Arizona Wildlands Invasive Plant Working Group (AZ-WIPWG) assessment. Green = suitable habitat; White = unsuitable habitat; Gray = unknown. Based on Brown, Lowe & Pase (1980) vegetation communities.



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